DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 349 707 EA 024 327

AUTHOR Bauer, Norman J.
TITLE The Implications of One Significant Component of "Education 2000": Parental Choice of Schooling.
PUB DATE May 92
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the New York State Association of Teacher Educators (Syracuse, NY, April 30-May 1, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Conservatism; Educational Improvement; *Educational Objectives; *Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Programs; *Liberalism; Policy Formation; Politics of Education; *School Choice; State Church Separation
IDENTIFIERS *America 2000

ABSTRACT

Issues in school choice are examined in this paper, with a focus on the link between the political philosophy of Education 2000 and the likely civic, economic, and religious consequences for the United States. The first part briefly identifies selected attributes of the conservative and liberal philosophies regarding capitalism, democracy, nationalism, religion, and science. The second part examines the significant attributes of Education 2000 (America 2000) and concludes that the Bush Administration views parental choice as a vehicle for achieving the six national education goals. A model of school types to assess the likely consequences of parental choice is developed in the third part. A conclusion is that the Education 2000 proposal has been guided by a conservative political philosophy, one designed to return the United States to the days of natural law theory, church-state integration, to the era of the "haves" and the "have-nots," and to the survival of the fittest mentality. Education 2000, with its emphasis on parental choice, will likely create divisive religious, economic, and civic tensions, among them the domination of schools by the religious and economic elites. (Contains 24 endnotes.) (LMI)

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF ONE SIGNIFICANT COMPONENT OF 'EDUCATION 2000': PARENTAL CHOICE OF SCHOOLING

A Paper Presented

by

Norman J. Bauer, Ed.D.
Professor of Social Foundations of Education
School of Education
SUNY-Geneseo, NY

Spring Conference

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New York State Association of Teacher Educators
Hotel Syracuse
Syracuse, NY

April 30-May 1
1992

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LIKELY CONSEQUENCES OF ONE SIGNIFICANT COMPONENT OF

EDUCATION 200O: An Education Strategy : [1]

PARENTAL CHOICE OF SCHOOLING

by

Norman J. Bauer, Ed.D.
May I, 1992

"Seek to preserve everything so far as possible, that time has consecrated; adapt the operation of traditional forces to suit present conditions; abhor confusion, and shun any policy which may produce it; be satisfied with less than the ideal; be generous rather than exacting; remember there is a higher justice than that framed in the law, and that all laws derive their efficacy from the spirit of obedience in the people.[2]

Burke

"One way to achieve a major improvement, to bring learning back into the classroom, especially for the currently most disadvantaged, is to give all parents greater control over their children's schooling, similar to that which those of us in the upper-income classes now have."[3]

Friedman

"The fountain heads of the attack (on schools) everywhere are large taxpayers and the institutions which represent the wealthier and privileged elements in the community. Those who make the least use of the public schools, who are the least dependent upon them because of superior economic status, who give their children at home by means of private teachers the same things which they denounce as extravagances when supplied in less measure to the children of the masses in schools, these are the ones most active in the attack upon the schools."[4]

Dewey

Introduction: Parental opportunity to choose schools within their home districts has been rapidly growing in recent years. The idea of 'parental choice', based upon a voucher system, was originally

developed by Milton Friedmen in 1955 [5] in his now classic work Capitalism and Freedom[6]. Subsequently, during the '70's, a number of communities around the nation attempted without a large measure of success to install voucher plans in their schools[7]. Later, early in the 80's, a constitutionally successful effort to install a parental choice model for both public and nonpublic schools was achieved by the state of Minnesota. Parental hoice was strongly emphasized and supported by the Reagan administration during the congressional debate leading to the adoption of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA)[8] on July 31, 1981. It was reemphasized repeatedly by Secretary of Education William Bennett during his tenure as the leader of the U.S. Department of Education during the immediate post-RISK years. More recently parental choice has been advanced as the policy which would have the most positive impact on school improvement by John Chubb and Terry Moe in their widely acclaimed 1990 book, Politics, Markets, and America's Schools. [9] A bit earlier, Myron Lieberman, in his 1989 book entitled Privatization and Educational Choice, [10] had supported the policy of parental choice as the means to improve school results. Hence, it was not unexpected to find that parental choice as a means for improving educational outcomes had been accepted by the conservative Bush administration as a key organizational attribute of its educational strategy, publicly revealed on April 18, 1991, under the rubric of Education 2000.

Today, some thirty-seven years after its original conceptualization, again during a most conservative period in our

nation's history, the concept of parental choice which the Bush administration has incorporated in its Education 2000 strategy is being heralded as a panacea for achieving better school results on the grounds that it will encourage the sort of market-based competition between schools, public and private, which its advocates argue will bring about the improvement of all schools.

Purpose. The purpose of this paper is to examine this panacea by:

a. Briefly identifying selected attributes of both the conservative and the liberal political philosophies.

b. Identifying the significant attributes of Education 2000: An Education Strategy.

c. Constructing and employing a graphic model which will empower one with the ability, clearly and accurately, to perceive the political philosophy with which Education 2000 is closely allied, and to examine the likely civic, economic, and religious consequences for our democratic society of the *parental choice* component of this proposal for improving schooling in our nation.

Assumptions. Three basic assumptions have guided my thinking as this paper has been prepared:

a. The institution of schooling always is intimately related to the political, social and economic philosophy of the society which has created the need for it; it is not, nor could it ever be, a neutral institution.

b. A corollary to 'a', different political philosophies always will generate quite different theories of schooling; hence, dissensus and not consensus, almost always will be reflected by

the views of the persons comprising a society relative to the structural design, curricular content, outcome expectations and financial support with which they support schooling.

c. Public schools have been, and continue to be, since their inception during that great humanitarian period which emerged during the Jacksonian administration, the most significant public institution our country has ever established.

Conservative and Liberal Political Philosophies

The purpose of this section of the paper is not to develop an exhaustive treatment of the characteristics of either liberal or conservative political philosophy; merely to identify a handful of salient characteristics which tend to represent some of the more prominent views of each of these ways of shaping democratic political order. To achieve my first purpose I am going to construct and employ five categories of societal activity, capitalism, democracy, nationalism, religion and science, and very briefly identify the normative vision of a good society which emanates from both the conservative and liberal political positions.

Capitalism. From the standpoint of the **conservative,** *capitalism,* based upon free enterprise represents one of the most important of our societal values. While there is, on occasion, a measure of concern about *laissez faire* unrestraint, most often there is a deep belief in the idea that the free play of market forces will eventually generate the most positive outcomes for the society as a whole. Hence there is much opposition to government regulation, to 'statism', to any sorts of social blueprints, to any significant egalitarian thrust; rather,

economic stress is placed upon a 'survival of the fittest' notion not dissimilar to the thinking which Andrew Carnegie expressed a bit over a hundred years ago:

> "While the law may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department. We accept and welcome, therefore, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment, the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few, and the law of competition between these, as being not only beneficial, but essential to the future progress of the race." 11

While the **liberal** vision of *capitalism* tends to accept it as a basic economic pattern of order, it does so with serious reservatons. For it has witnessed the struggle for economic reform which has taken place in our society ever since the 1820's and it is sensitive to the problems people confront in a society if the principle of *laissez faire* economic theory is permitted to run rampant. Rippa stresses this matter very cogently when he points out that:

> "During the Enlightenment and the great reform era, acquisitive gain was viewed not so much as an exclusive goal reserved for only a few but rather as a means toward improving society in general. Now the monopolistic power of a few great titans of American industry and capital was based increasingly on materialistic values as ends in themselves. Such a rationale differed sharply from older patterns of thought and symbolized in a dramatic fashion the great transformation occurring in American society." 12

Democracy. When the **conservative** speaks about *democracy* he most often thinks about it as a moral term in which the intrinsic worth and equality of persons will be realized when they meet their 'maker.' Here on earth the conservative believes there is a natural order of things, a natural aristocracy of human beings, a hierarchy of natural talents, and that what we must do is avoid any sort of social levelling. All persons, in other words, are not perceived to be equal, and we ought

to avoid any doctrinaire proposals which would attempt to build a society which would be directed toward a vision of such a utopian notion.

Democracy from the **liberal** position is a far more humanitarian concept, recognizing the dignity and rights of all persons, stressing the civil liberties of all citizens, among which are included their rights to excellent public schooling at public expense, open in every respect to public inquiry and accountability, their suffrage rights, their rights to live and work in a variety of integrated, humanitarian environments, their rights to healthy living and their right to earn a substantial measure of economic well being.

Nationalism. Because of the clear societal recognition of the significant interdependency of nations throughout the world there must be, of necessity, a measure of divisiveness and uncertainty among **conservatives** about the position they should adopt relative to *nationalism* . The Gulf War in 1991, conducted to guarantee the preservation of our supply of oil, and the current unwillingness of the Bush Administration to commit itself to attending an international conference pertaining to the likely serious consequences for our earth which are connected with the depletion of the ozone layer represent two glaring examples of the problem the conservatives confront when it comes to this significant category of political structure. Nonetheless, in so far as it is feasible, the conservative tends to make every effort to retain a xenophobic position regarding the importance of the United States in relation to countries around the world.

Liberal thought related to *nationalism* places significant stress on the plurality of interdependent nation-states which make up the world, on the need to be a strong advocate of the United Nations, on the need to avoid xenophobic thinking, including the need to defend public schools when they are attacked by excessively nationalistic groups and on the importance of building improved and lasting international relationships, relationships which stress the good for people wherever they live, particularly those who are seeking to excape from the domination of political oppression.

Religion. An anthropmorphic conception of God, a universe designed for humans and governed by natural law, a strong belief in God, a conviction that school ought to support and teach religious values, a persistent opposition to a strict constructionist interpretion of the "wall" of separation between church and state along with a strong belief in the importance of providing financial support to help offset the costs of parental choice of schools with a religious persuasion for their children, and a deep antipathy for the principles associated with secular humanism, are among some of the more salient principles which constitute the thinking of **conservatives** regarding *religion* and religious practices.

On the other hand, the religious views of **liberals** are profoundly concerned about the condition of humans in this world, are deeply committed to the power of human intelligence to create and solve problems which will have a direct impact on the improvement of human

welfare, are strong advocates of first amendment rights, particularly those related to the separation of church and state, are much more tolerant of the range of beliefs about *religion* with which the consciences of different human beings and human groups often are comfortable, and possess a deep faith in the power of public schools to solidify and perpetuate democratic principles, thereby improving the lot of humans everywhere in our society.

Science. Based on empiricism, carefully designed experiments and controlled observations, *science* offers the most severe challenge to the **conservative.** Comfortable with the natural law theory which emanated from the early development of science during the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, conservatives have been increasingly disconcerted by the post-Darwinian, post-structuralist, implications of man's new dialogue with nature which projects science into today's revolutionary world of instability, disequilibrium and turbulence with a creative, mind-energizing force which has brought forth a profound reconceptualization of the physical sciences, synthesizing being and becoming into a unitary rather than the traditional dualist, vision of the universe.

From the very outset of scientific thought, the **liberal** has been most hospitable to the scientific enterprise. Particularly since the advent of post-structuralism, liberals have recognized the power of *science* and scientific knowledge to improve the condition of humankind throughout the world. Liberals are most often committed to the power of public schools to enable every student to acquire the

requisite conceptual understanding and the performative competency to know and to apply the method of science to the indeterminate situations which humans regularly encounter. Liberals possess a profound belief in the the power of the method of science to acquire and use empirical evidence to evaluate social policies and social institutions rather than to depend on the often oppressive, hegemonizing force of tradition to guide the practices of human beings.

In summary, **conservatives**, possess a deep antipathy to social change, have an abiding respect for tradition, believe in a divine creator, perceive a close and integral connection between ethics, morality and religion, have a significant measure of fear about the implications of post-structural science for human institutions, tend to be pessimistic about human nature and desire to foster preservation and transmission as the significant general aims of schools.

Liberals, on the other hand, have a pround respect for openness and empirical data, a much more optimistic view of human beings, a deeper interest in the common good and the general welfare of the common people, on the need to improve any institution which is not serving that welfare, and the capacity of humans to shape and to solve problems which will have an effect on the control of their future, with a continued emphasis on the rights, including the right to happiness, and a confidence in the capacity of humans to intervene in their world for the purpose of making it more inhabitable for themselves and others.

Significant Attributes of EDUCATION 2000

Six National Education Goals

1. Children to start school ready to learn.
2. High school graduation to be at least 90 percent.
3. Students to demonstrate competency in English, math, science, history, geography.
4. Students to be first in world in science and math achievement.
5. Adults to be literate, to possess knowledge, skills necessary for economy and citizenship.
6. Schools to be free of drugs, violence; to provide an environment conducive to learning.

FOUR TRACKS TO BE THE MEANS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS

Track I: For Today's Students
Radical Improvement of today's schools and accountability for results

Track II: For Tomorrow's Students
A New Generation of American Schools

PARENTAL CHOICE OF SCHOOLS
A VITAL COMPONENT OF TRACKS I AND II

Track III: For Those of us Already out of School and in the Work Force
A Nation of Students

Track IV: For Schools to Succeed
Communities where Learning can Happen

A PACKAGE OF STRATEGIES TO ACCOMPANY EACH OF THE FOUR TRACKS [13]

Let us commence our analysis of *Parental Choice* by identifying precisely what Education 2000 says about the matter of such choice. To begin, the proposal stipulates that "... choice gives them [parents, voters] the leverage to act. Such choices should include all schools that serve the public and are accountable to public authority, regardless of who runs them. New incentives will be provided to states and localities to adopt comprehensive choice policies, and the largest federal school aid program (Chapter I) will be revised to ensure that federal dollars

follow the child, to whatever extent state and local policies permit."[14]

Later in the document we find that "... [choice] will apply to all schools except where the courts find a constitutional bar. The power of choice is in the parents' leverage both to change schools and to make change in the schools. The definition of "public school" should be broadened to include any school that serves the public and is held accountable by a public authority.... Rich parents, white and non-white, already have school choice. They can move or pay for private schooling. The biggest beneficiaries of new choice policies will be those who now have no alternatives. With choice they can find a better school for their children or use that leverage to improve the school their children now attend."[15]

In response to a question regarding the single most important part of the America 2000 strategy, the claim is made that "the most controversial may be school choice - at least until it's well understood...."[16]

A few pages later stress is placed on the need to reorient schools so as to focus on results, not on procedures, and one aspect of this reorientation would be "...giving parents more responsibility for their children's education through magnet schools, public school choice, and other strategies."[17] It should not go unnoticed here that this is the sole occasion in the entire proposal in which parental choice is suggested for *public* schools.

Approaching the end of the document we find the suggestion, which, in various guises, has been integrated throughout the proposal, that "we can encourage educational excellence by encouraging parental

choice. The concept of choice draws its fundamental strength from the principle at the very heart of the democratic idea. Every adult American has the right to vote, the right to decide where to work, where to live. It's time parents were free to choose the schools that their children attend. This approach will create the competitive climate that stimulates excellence in our private and parochial schools as well." [18]

It is clear from the foregoing specific citations relative to *parental choice* that the Bush administration has a deep commitment to the belief that parental choice of schooling will produce the sorts of results which will bring about the achievement of the six National Education Goals which have been established as the aims of the Education 2000 proposal.

LIKELY CONSEQUENCES OF *PARENTAL CHOICE* FOR OUR DEMOCRATIC NATION

COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF SCHOOLING IN OUR NATION

Public Sch	Industrial/ Business Sch	Milieu	Proprietary Sch	Nonpublic Sch	Home Sch

RELIGIOUS ——— ECONOMIC ——— CIVIC

ANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES OF PARENTAL CHOICE

RIGHT OF PARENTS TO CHOOSE SCHOOLING

OUR CONSTITUTIONALLY GOVERNED NATION

For the purposes of the following analysis of the likely consequences of *parental choice* for our society, I am going to direct my remarks primarily toward the public and the non-public dimensions of this paradigm, referring to the other forms of schooling only if the discussion requires.

Three categories will be used to guide the analysis, civic, economic and religion. While my analysis will be guided by these categories it should be understood that they function interactively and that remarks made in relation to one of these conceptual notions can and often will be closely linked with one or both of the others. Because of the prominent attention it has generated regarding choice, let us commence with the religious category.

Religion. As many of us know, the first sixteen words of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution stipulate that **"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;..."** Adopted December 15th, 1791, just a bit more than two-hundred years ago, these words, the first in our Bill of Rights, provided the citizens of our country with rights never before recognized by any government in the world; thereby initiating an experiment in the separation of the transempirical dogma of religious persuasions from our new, publicly accountable governmental structure which has continued since without interruption. Indeed, during much of the intervening period they have served to provide a solid wedge between those who would have us fund their particular dogmatic creeds and the right of people to believe and to worship in accord with their private consciences.

Increasingly, however, particularly since World-War II, powerful

and aggressive religious pressure groups, fundamentalist and mainstream Christian organizations, have made a deliberate and sustained effort to thwart the two principles inherent in these words, the 'nonestablishment principle' ond the 'free exercise' principle, in an effort to compel others, frequently not of their persuasion, to pay public taxes to support their particular religious persuasions. During the past forty years legislators have been increasingly inclined to pander to these groups, often fully aware of the fact that the legislation which they were sponsoring or supporting contradicted these principles; unwilling to resist these organizations for fear of the impact on their political fortunes, safe with the knowledge that contested legislation would be analyzed by the courts and overturned if it proved to be unconstitutional. Using this strategy, they have been able during this period to 'have their cake and eat it too.' That is, they have been willing to rationalize their positions when voting on proposed legislation on the grounds that, should it prove to contradict these all-important sixteen words, some court, very likely our country's Supreme Court, would render a judgement which would reveal its unconstitutionality, thereby preserving the 'wall' of separation between nonempirical dogma and empirical, publicly responsible government. Of course, during the years between the passage of such legislation and the rendering of such judgments the use of public tax dollars to achieve the intention of the ill-conceived and hypocritically supported legislation would have been going on unabted, thereby circumventing these First Amendment principles without the possibility of recourse from anyone.

Presidents of the United States as well as governors of our

states also have frequently pandered to these groups in an effort to solicit their support at the ballot box. The Nixon, Reagan and Bush administrations, respectively, purposely and with clear knowledge of the potential for violating these religious principles, regularly catered to the whims and desires of these groups. Indeed, the Reagan Administration went so far as to establish an official Embassy to the Vatican, an action which was challenged by a large group of concerned Americans all the way to the Supreme Court, only to be told they were 'without standing.' So the Embassy continues to exist and function, gradually, very subtly, conditioning many in our society to accept the belief that formal recognition of one transempiric, dogmatic institution among the hundreds of such institutions that exist, is of no significant consequence for the development of human mind in our society. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, we have been witnessing an increasing tendency of many in the larger U.S. culture to lose sight of the profound importance of the 'wall' of separation if we are to sustain the broadly based moral and civil vitality of our democratic social order.

Here in New York State we have also been witnessing an effort to plunder the State Treasury in an effort to obtain tax monies which violate Article XI, Section 3, of the New York State Constitution, which reads: **"Neither the state nor any subdivision thereof shall use its property or credit or any public money, or authorize or permit either to be used, directly or indirectly, in aid or maintenance, other than for examination and inspection, of any school or institution of learning, in whole or in part under the control or direction of any religious denomination**

or in which any denominational tenet or doctrine is taught, but the legislature may provide for the transportaiton of children to and from any school or institution of learning."

Clearly the citizens of New York State have a desire to sustain a clear and distinct separation between the unprovable, dogmatic claims which guide the decisions and actions of religious groups and the open, publicly accountable claims which guide the decisions and actions of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of our democratic government.

Indeed, the recent persistent efforts in New York State to emphasize the importance of the rapidly emerging cultural pluralism in New York as well as throughout the Nation, has been generated by the cultural need to integrate ethnic racial, gender, socio-economic class, sexuality preferences, physically and mentally different persons, into our public schools without bias toward any. We are a state and a nation, in other words, of many cultures, of many beliefs and dispositions, of many religions; necessitating the obligation, as perhaps never before during the past two-hundred years, to retain the wall of separation between church and state, to be neutral in our views about religion, whether it be Judaism, Islam, Christianity, or any one of the many other religious beliefs which attract the citizens in our country.

Clearly, Education 2000, with its stress on *Parental Choice*, is an educational strategy which flagrantly advocates the violation of these principles. And, what is most serious about this matter is that, as recently as July, 1991, six of fourteen members of our own Board of Regents voted to initiate a pilot program which would have supported legislation which would have payed tax money to the religious schools

of children whose parents had freely chosen to have them indoctrinated by a sectarian school of their choice; thereby diminishing the sense of responsibility we want to see as a part of the character traits in all our citizens by relieving these parents of having to face up to all of the fully known, financial obligations which they would incur as a consequence of exercising their free choice.

So much for the category of religion. Let us move on to that of economics.

Economic. Throughout Education 2000 much stress is placed on 'packages of accountability', demands which will be imposed on each of the four tracks which the proposal employs to achieve the six National Education Goals toward which schooling in our Nation is to be focused. These demands represent an emerging conventional sense of meaning associated with the notion of educational accountability, namely, the public reporting and dissemination of the results of achievement tests taken by students. The Comprehensive Achievement Reports which our state recently has begun requiring all school districts to publish annually represents this sense of meaning. But there is another sense of meaning which accountability conveys and which never seems to be heard. I refer here to the need for **any** institution receiving public funds, particularly an institution such as a school which can and often does have a lifelong impact on the civic and economic fortunes of its students, to have its finances, as well as its budget-making and approving processes, open to public scrutiny and approval. Public schools, of course, because of their publicly verifiable, empirical nature, encounter this democratic requirement at every turn. Non-public schools **never** reveal to the public in an empirical, publicly

verifiable way, their monetary wealth, their sources of funds, or their ways of making decisions about how to use these monies. Such matters are **never** revealed to the public community. These institutions clearly operate outside the realm of public accountability in this realm of their institutional management. Clearly this form of operation is defensible for any privately operated institution; but it should be clear that such an institution cannot demand or expect to obtain public funds while operating under such a nonempirical, nonpublic, nonopen standard. Either nonpublic institutions, whether sectarian or nonsectarian, clearly recognize their need to subscribe to the same openness regarding their finances as do their counterparts, the public schools, or they are not entitled to **any** public tax dollars.

Much stress is placed in the Education 2000 proposal on the need for everyone in our country to acquire those knowledges, skills and dispositions which will enable the country to compete successfully with other industrialized countries throughout the world. Clearly reiterating the arguments found in A Nation at Risk and in the Carnegie Report, this proposal says nothing about the possibility of restructuring the income distribution in our society if we were to 'win' this presumed competition; nor does it suggest that anyone in the public domain would be involved in determining such matters as pricing policy, as plant closings, as the relocation of production jobs in countries where salaries are the very lowest anywhere. Apparently, were we to win this competition we would merely sustain the continuation of the current structure of decision-making, the current maldistribution of wealth, the current class structure. Given the clandestine, nonpublic nature of such corporate decision-making, the

quality of schooling which we we develop in our schools can have little if any impact on the means which are employed to engage in competition with our foreign counterparts.

Even if such decision-making were made public, every question needs to be raised about the consequences which would be likely to emerge, assuming, for instance, that we were to win this competitive battle, for countries elsewhere in the world. We have been making every effort to persuade our students and the larger public that we are living in a global, interdependent world, a world in which our fortunes are closely tied to the fortunes of others elsewhere on this earth, that what we must do is learn how to function effectively in a cooperative way, not only within our schools and classrooms, but also in the workplace, in the political arena, whether it be local, state, national or global. Clearly competitive forms of thinking are alien to this sort of intellectual frame of mind. Nowhere in the proposal is there even a hint of recognition of this glaring contradiction.

One cannot help but recognize in the document the dominant influence expected to be imposed on educational endeavors throughout our country by business and industry. Because most of the larger public has no knowledge whatever of the historic effort, dating back to the Reconstruction Period, to shape and control educational design, curricular content and learning outcomes of such business organizations as the National Association of Manufacturers, and because the intellectual structures of many classroom teachers and administrators have been denied this same knowledge, largely because the study of the history of education frequently has been perceived as a nonpractical, a nondefensible component of a professional

preparation program, we have many practicing teachers and administrators who have not the foggiest notion of the narrow, job-specific, orientation of business organizations, of business men, about what schools ought to be teaching. The Education 2000 proposal, with its stress on 'skill standards', on 'skill certificates', on 'skill clinics', on 'skill upgrading',[19] is clearly in line with the sort of thinking about what our schools are to teach and achieve that has prevailed in our country in the minds of powerful business leaders since the Civil War. One needs only to peruse such powerful, empirical studies as that of Raymond Callahan[20] to become most wary of the involvement of business and industry in the design, in the determination of content, in the stress on desireable learning outcomes in our public schools, which are likely to emanate from business people.

Civic. Much stress is placed in Education 2000, particularly in National Goal No. 3, on the need to ensure that "... all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, ... ";[21] also in National Goal No. 5 where one finds the desire to have every adult acquire that measure of literacy, that degree of knowledge and skill which will enable one to "...exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."[22]

Clearly students who read our federal and state constitutions, who consider the senses of meaning associated with such notions as *accountability,* will become increasingly perplexed, very likely disenchanted, even offended by the consistent, indefensible, hypocritical ways in which they come to perceive the efforts of the

executive, legislative and judicial branches of our government to circumvent principles in the fundamental document, the fundamental moral system, which we have to sustain an integrated, civil society in the face of the incredible complexities created by the pluralities of beliefs which are extant in our country.

Despite all its efforts to support an educational strategy to achieve the National Education Goals toward which it is committed, the proposal falls far short of pursuing the sort of powerful moral character which we so desperately need in our time. Indeed, none of the accountability packages associated with any of the four tracks proposed to achieve the National Goals really provides the sort of emphasis on moral character which our society so desparately requires.

Nor for that matter do **any** of the National Education Goals place a strong emphasis on the development of moral character in our schools. Goal No. 3 comes closest, perhaps, with its stress on 'responsible citizenship',[23] but this is so deeply embedded in the goal statement, to say nothing about the vagueness of the term 'citizenship', that little if any significant stress is likely to be placed on the development of moral capacities.

Summary.

In this paper an attempt has been made briefly to outline a few of the characteristics of two political philosophies with which we need to be familiar if we are correctly to perceive the political connections and ramifications of Education 2000. An effort has been made to identify the precise way in which the idea of *Parental Choice*

has entered into the thinking of those who constructed this proposal. Accompanying this effort has been the development of a model which may be used to assess the likely consequences of *Parental Choice* for our society. Finally an effort has been made to consider a selected number of likely conseuqences for our society if the Education 2000 proposal should emerge as a full-blown effort to transform our nation's schools. Clearly one can conclude from this analysis that the proposal represents a powerful effort which has been guided entirely by a conservative political philosophy, one designed to return us to the days of natural law theory, to the era of church-state integration, to the era of the haves and the have-nots, to the survival of the fittest mentality of such thinkers as William Graham Sumner and Herbert Spencer.[24]

While I am sympathetic to the need continuously to work toward the continued renewal and improvement of our public schools, I am not persuaded, indeed, I am far, far from convinced by the Education 2000 proposal that its emphasis on *Parental Choice* will do anything whatever to improve the quality of schooling which our nation provides its young people. Indeed, if anything, it is likely to create religious, economic and civic tensions which will be inimical to the democratic structure of our delicately integrated, pluralistic society. Indeed, I find this proposal by the Bush Administration to be a quite intemperate and irresponsible effort to bring about the domination of educational thought and practice, particularly of our public schools, one of our most important social institutions, by powerful religious and economc groups in our society, often accountable to no one for their decisions and actions.

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5. Friedman, Milton. (1955). "The role of government in education." In: Robert A. Solo, Editor. Economics and the public interest. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

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7. See, for instance: Coons, John E. and Sugarman, Stephen D. (1978). Education by choice: The case for family control. Berkeley: University of California Press.

8. The act which superseded and replaced the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It had not been carefully examined by any congressional committee, and much of it was in handwriting on the day of its passage.

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10. Lieberman, Myron. (1989). Privatization and educational choice. New York: St. Martin's Press.

11. Carnegie, Andrew. (June 1889). "Wealth." In: North American Review. 148:653-64.

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13. Stated in truncated form, the package for each track consists of:

Track I: World Class Standards, American Achievement Tests, Test results used by colleges, universities and employers, Presidential citations for educational excellence, Presidential Achievement Scholarships, Report Cards, Changes in National Assessment of Education Progress, New choice incentives and choice applied to Chapter I, Educational flexibility legislation to support the school as the site of reform, Merit Schools Program to reward schools that move toward the goals, Governors' Academies for School Leaders, Governors' Academies for School Leaders, Governors' Academies for Teachers, Differential pay for teachers, Alternative certification for teachers and principals and Honoring outstanding teachers in the five core subjects.

Track II: Establishing a New Generation of American Schools, a New American Schools Development Corporation, Design Teams, America 2000 Communities and 535+ New American Schools to initiate the pogram.

Track III:Skill certificates, Skill Clinics and Skill upgrading.

Track IV: Rennaissance of sound American values such as strength of family, parental responsibility, neighborly commitment, community-wide caring of churches, civic organization,s business, labor and the media, Creating and sustaining health communities, communities where education really happens, Americ 2000 Communities who have (a) Adopted the six National Education Goals, (b) Developed a community-wide strategy to achieve them, (c) Designed a report card to measure results, and (d) planned for and supported a New American School.

14. Bush. Op. Cit., 14-15.

15. IBID. 31.

16. IBID. 33.

17. IBID. 42.

18. IBID. 53.

19. IBID. 24.

20. Callahan, Raymond E. (1962). Education and the cult of efficiency: A study of the social forces that have shaped the administration of

public schools. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

21. Bush, Op. Cit., 38

22. IBID. 3.

23. IBID.

24. See, for instance: Sumner, William Graham. (1883). What social classes owe to each other. New York: Harper & Bros. and Spencer, Hert. (1871). Education: Intellectual, moral, and physical. New York: D. Appleton.